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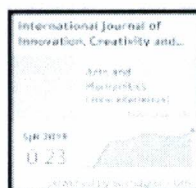
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[PDF](#) **The Political Semiology of Khao Kho Royal Palace**

Pixitthikun Kaew-ngam^a, ^aAssistant Professor of Politics and Government, Political Science Department, Humanity and Social Science Faculty, Phetchabun Rajabhat University, Thailand. Email: pixitthikun.kae@pju.ac.th

Khao Kho Royal Palace is not only the King Rama IX's resort/recreation place, but also a monument of the battle between the Thai state and the Communist Party of Thailand. Moreover, the palace today is one of the most famous tourist's attractions of Phetchabun. This article follows the interdisciplinary/alternative academic genre which has collaborated concepts of architecture and politics together to construct the explanation on social phenomenon. The purpose of this article is to uncover the concealed political by using Roland Barthes' concept of mythology to demythologise within an 'apolitical TRUTH' of Khao Kho Royal Palace. The fieldworks were Khao Kho Palace's architecture and historical documents. Result of the demythologisation revealed many political connotations behind the portrayed picture/myth of tourist attraction to the palace namely: the monarchy, culture of Sarit's regime, the replacing of a weaponry warfare with Yutta Pattana, the ideological contestation between Khana Patsadon's and the absolute monarchy's, and most of all the firmly establishment of the 'TRUTH' about the relationship between the King and Phetchabun people. Pages 160 to 176

[PDF](#) **Strategies for Cross-Border Tourism between Thailand and the Lao PDR: A stakeholders' perspective**

Prakobsiri Pakkeepinit^a, Thanawut Limpanitgul^b, Nattapat Manirochana^c, ^aSchool of Management and Information Sciences, University of Phayao, Thailand, ^bFaculty of Business Administration for Society, Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand, ^cThammasat Business School, Thammasat University, Thailand. Email: prakobsiri.pak@uap.ac.th, thanawut@swu.ac.th, nattapatm@swu.ac.th

The objective of this article is to present various perspectives on the development of cross-border tourism of Thailand and the Lao PDR gained from interviews and focus group meetings with key persons from relevant public and private sectors. The emphasis is on the important guidelines and the activities in which the two countries should cooperate in terms of the development of the infrastructure and facilities for tourism, as well as the enhancement of human resources and marketing strategies. This article will also provide some guidelines to the future research on cross-border tourism between Thailand and Lao PDR.

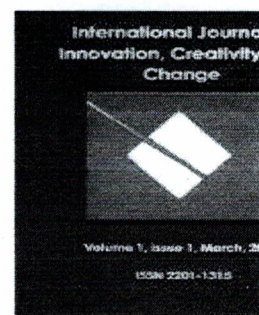




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Dear author(s),

Pixitthikun Kaew-ngam

Corresponding Author: Email: pixitthikun.kae@pcru.ac.th

It's my pleasure to inform you that, after the peer review, your paper "**The Political Semiology of Khao Kho Royal Palace**" has been ACCEPTED to publish in our journal namely ***International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change***, ISSN: 2201-1315. It will be published in the Regular Issue of August 2020. You will need to pay the publication fee within 7 working days. I believe that our collaboration will help to accelerate the global knowledge creation and sharing one step further. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

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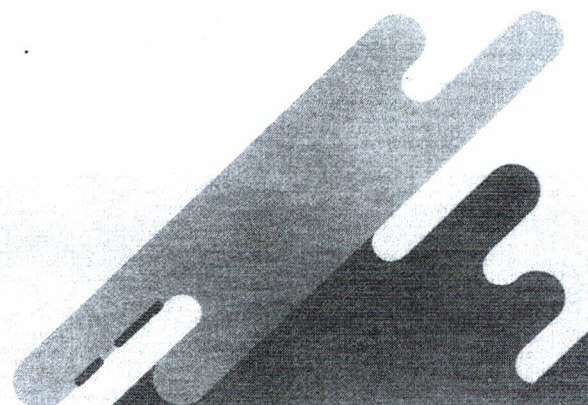
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The Political Semiology of Khao Kho Royal Palace

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Khao Kho Royal Palace is not only the King Rama IX's resort recreation place, but also, a monument of the battle between the Thai state and the Communist Party of Thailand. Moreover the palace today is one of the most famous tourist's attractions of Phetchabun. This article follows the interdisciplinary/alternative academic genre which has collaborated concepts of architecture and politics together to construct the explanation on social phenomenon. The purpose of this article is to uncover the concealed 'the political' by using Roland Barth's concept of mythology to demythologise within an 'apolitical TRUTH' of Khao Kho Royal Palace. The fieldworks were Khao Kho Palace's architecture and historical documents. Result of the demythologisation revealed many political connotations behind the portrayed picture/myth of tourist's attraction to the palace namely; the monarchy culture of Sarit's regime, the replacing of a weaponry warfare with Yutta Pattana, the ideological contestation between Khana Ratsadon's and the absolute monarchy's, and most of all the firmly establishment of the 'TRUTH' about the relationship between the king and Phetchabun people.

Key words: *Khao Kho Royal Palace, Political Connotation of Architecture, Barthian Mythology.*

Introduction: The Khao Kho Royal Palace as a Monument

Between 1965 – 1984, the Khao Kho mountainous area was a battleground in the fight between the Royal Thai Army and the Thai communist party. Before Route 21 was built in 1968, the geography of this area was a high mountain range (*Khao*), covered with dense jungle especially Fan Palm (*Kho*; *Livistona Speciosa*) and caves that make the area difficult to reach. The Khao Kho mountain range borders 3 provinces; Phetchabun, Pitsanulok, and Loei, which is inhabited by the Hmong people. The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) selected this area to spread Communist ideology and set up the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1965. In November, 20th of the same year, the PLA attacked the Village Protector Volunteer site and took the rock



mountainous terrain called *Phu Hin Rong Kla* (*Rong Kla* Rock Mountain) as a stronghold of guerrilla warfare. The incident was called until today the *Wan Sieng Puen Tak* (the date of the gun blaze). The CPT established the State Committee, PLA Council, Peoples Court, and the State's Institutions: schools, medical units etc. in many villages. To resist CPT operations, the 3rd Army Area set up the 394 Battalion Combat Team at Lom Sak airport on December 25th, 1968. Subsequently the 4th Special Force Sarit Sena Camp of King Rama IX and Queen Sirikit in June 11th, 1976 was visited. The psychological warfare was ordered to usurp the mass including students whom join CPT after the October, 14th incident. The battle of Khao Kho ended after the 66/23 order which decriminalised the Communists in 1980 (Thonglek, 2017).

The beginning of the creation of Khao Kho Royal Palace was acquired after the visiting of King Rama IX to open the Khao Kho Sacrifices Memorial in 1984. The king was very impressed with the landscape of Khao Ya (*Ya* mountain) which where suitable to launch His Majesty's Royal Project. Consequently, the 1st Army Area Commander and Phetchabun Governor cooperated to construct the palace by using the Phetchabun community benefaction, until the construction was finished in the next year. The Phetchabun people offered the palace to the king for his favour and to be the office of the king to conduct the Royal Project in Khao Kho (Documents and Archives Processing Committee in Director of The Celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King Rama IX, 2000: 66).

In order to depoliticise the situation, the official statement on the reason of creation of Khao Kho Royal Palace inscripted that the palace was made as a memorial to King Rama IX's gracefulness. This related to his support of the Phetchabun people's morale in the battle with CPT, as a king's office and recreation at Khao Kho (Documents and Archives Processing Committee in Director of The Celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King Rama IX, 2000). Moreover, in order to depoliticise the palace, The Government Official Tourism web site describes the 'Interesting Fact' of the palace as "...the King and the Queen's accommodation during their visit to Amphur Khao Kho or nearby..." (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2010). These facts have already detracted politics out of the Thais' memory of Khao Kho Royal Palace, namely, the palace has become the sign which is used to connect Thais with physical-scape and ideological-scape to establish the 'apolitical TRUTH' that the palace not only is His Majesty's resort, but also portray the 'recall' (*monere*) of the palace as a monument of the graceful relation between King Rama IX and the Phetchabun people in subdued CPT in the Cold War Period.

For these background and to uncover the concealed 'the political' within 'apolitically TRUTH' of Khao Kho Royal Palace. This article deployed Roland Barth's Semiology as a research methodology. The fieldworks were; first, Khao Kho Palace as a text where the denotation will be decoded from the palace's architecture; second, the relationship culture between the king and his people as context where the connotation will be deciphered. The goal of the analysis,

following Eagleton and Eagleton's (1991), was not only to unmask the mystification which distorted the real contradicted power, but to reveal the power relation process of 'things', or 'the Khao Kho Palace's myth' in this case.

An 'Apolitically' or a 'Politically' of Architecture

The study of the relationship between the architectural physical space and politics is based on the conceptualisation that the physical presence is the product of the social relation including the ideological space. The artistic physical presences of things in any society always have a linkage to the ideas of power, rooted in each society. Hence, Architecture is not created/designed for its own sake. Furthermore, architectural designs are created to serve the ideology depending on any social context while the architects/designers/creators are just an agent. So, architecture has a linguistic capability which consists of units of codes, meanings, semantic shifts, and syntaxes. (Hattenhauer, 1984; Leach, 1997: xiv; Massey, 1998; Findley, 2005; Thompson, 2007; Usavagovitwong, 2011). As a sign they have made a collective agreement of natural and causal relationships (Nugraha, 2019), architecture and politics have been bounded together. In many aspects, politics has the task of developing and improving the society we live in by deploying policies. Architecture reflects holistic perspectives and contexts of its society (Swedish Association of Architecture, 2009).

Architectural designs always refer to social and ecological imperatives for change and open up questions around architecture's engagement. Architecture produces and/or (re)produces values; e.g. religious, social, political, etc.; to suit the needs of society. (Petrescu & Togal, 2017; Ardejani & Askarizad, 2018). Culture is the important basis of state power. So, all architecture is a sign of power (Treesuwan, 2019). The logic of architectural design is based on a bio-political process of subject formation (Wallenstein, 2009). As we have seen from these references and following Charoensin-O-Larn's definition (2008), architecture is always concealing a 'politicality' of things. The reason for the hidden aspect of politics in architecture, especially state architecture, is because explicit state power is unacceptable if it is not bared for public interest (Dovey, 1999) In conclusion, architecture is the political instrument to possess the goal of the state in the construction of its people/subjects' memory. Clearly, architecture is not only a 'text' which can be denoted but also a 'context' which can be connoted (Kanchanapradit, 2010; Usavagovitwong, 2011; Prakitnonthakan, 2015; Parsaee, Parva, & Karimi, 2015).

Many Thai academics have paid attention to this trend. For instance, Hatthakitkosol (1984) interpreted the design of Thai monuments and found many sets of ideological socialisation of the elites. This has strived towards the political worldview on Thai people's perception of Thai political society and has succumbed to them under the elitist's politics in every era. Kumsupa (2005) and Noobanjong (2007) studied the design of some monuments which have never been



changed; its meanings have been imposed by both Thai elites and people. Especially, the meaning-competing of the Democracy Monument on Ratchadamnoen Avenue which reflects the flow of Thai political power surrounding each periods interest/political group in Thailand. Kraipakorn & Khunthongpan (2016) highlighted both the success and failure in imposing ideology to change the perception of the people in a monument. For example, after the 1932 Siamese Revolution, *Khana Ratsadon* tried to establish a new architectural design which faded in their new concept of Thai-ness, while fading out the conservatism absolute in the monarchy's concept of Thai-ness. Or, in addition, the study of the Provincial Halls' architecture by Churstarponsiri (2001), which categorised the Thai Provincial Hall into 4 groups/periods. In every period the Thai Provincial Hall design has shown Thai bureaucratic ideologies that tried to legitimise their power by adapting the design of the state buildings to catch up with mainstream political trends of each period of social perception. Precisely, Thai Provincial Hall design is the product of Thai political transfer from an absolute monarchy centralisation of power before 1892 to a democratic discourse of Government Complex Center in 1980. Not the process of meaning imposing must occur in the long period of time. Charoensakwatana (2017) showed us the short term of change in his recommendation on the processes of 'construction/deconstruction/reconstruct/ celebration' of City Pillar Shrines from before until after 2006 Thai coup d'état made many City Pillar Shrines have become the Sign of Central Government's centralisation of power and tame local political power in the same time.

The study of the relevance between palace's architecture and power relation culture has been found in many works of Prakitnonthakan. From the reign of King Rama VI and VII, compare with the reign of King Rama V, as Prakitnonthakan (2005) pointed out, the palace's architectures which designed to intimate the utmost point of the king was dropped down. The reconstruction of King Rama VI's palaces was designed to look like 'common's villa' while King Rama VII's palaces were constructed as 'private recreation place' of 'private resort' in the rural. In another work, Prakitnonthakan (2009) also comment that, in the early 1920s, there was an uplift of the linkage idea between Thai-ness, people, and nationalism by *Khana Ratsadorn* (People's Party). After the Siamese revolution of 1932, this new concept of nationalism has replaced the idea of the absolute power of the king with the promotion the state co-ownership of the people. People became a stakeholder with the government administration. In the part of architecture, designed in-between 1932 – 1947, were imposed *Khana Ratsadon's* ideas of 'Thainess/Thai Nation'. Prakitnonthakan (2005, 2006, 2009, and 2015) defined this genre as "*Khana Ratsadon's Architecture*" which illustrated into 2 forms. First, modern architecture with the simple appearance such as linear, cubism, barely, cut form (flat roof deck), concrete masonry, and concrete wall panel through the roof; Second, Thai architectural concrete building which remain Thai-style architecture tradition but minimalised into perimeter and simple geometrical line. These 2 forms reflected *Khana Ratsadon's* concept of 'equality': abolish the concept of rank and dignity in Thai architecture; do not separate the building room



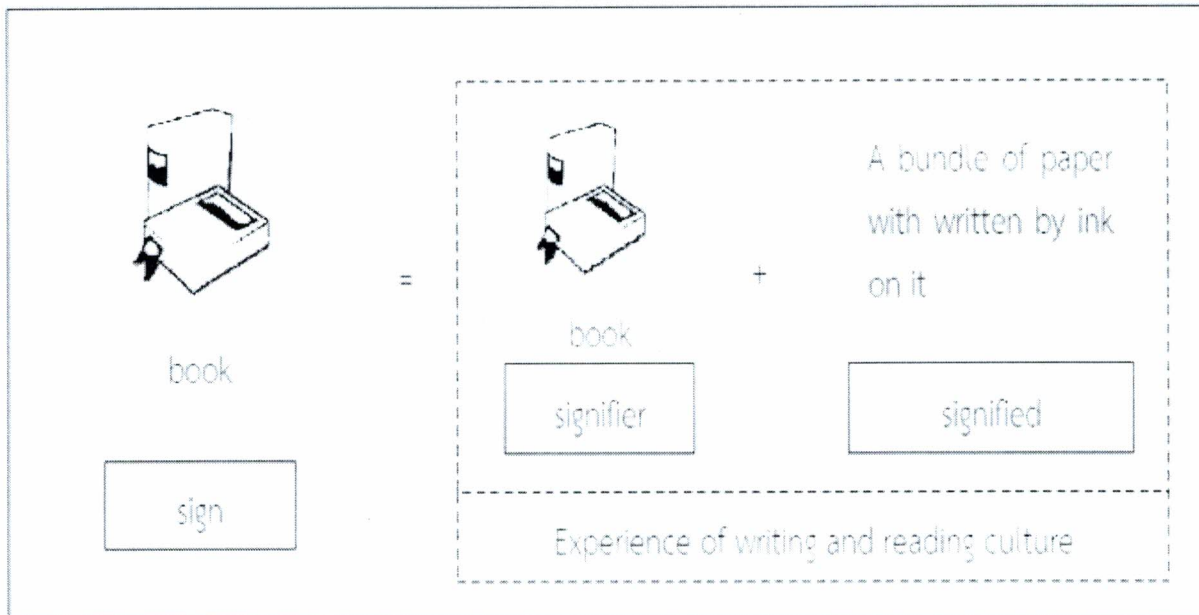
format between king, subject, ruler, and commoner; simple design with a bread box design without or less decoration.

In conclusion, architecture relates and implies with politics because architecture and social environment are co-existent. Architectural design legitimised elitist's idea, established 'TRUTH', iconised uniqueness and the ideological significance of each period. In fact, every apolitical architecture is political. To understand every dimension of architecture in any society especially the political dimension can induce us to understand and predict political possibility.

Barthe's Concept of Mythology and the Politics of Myth

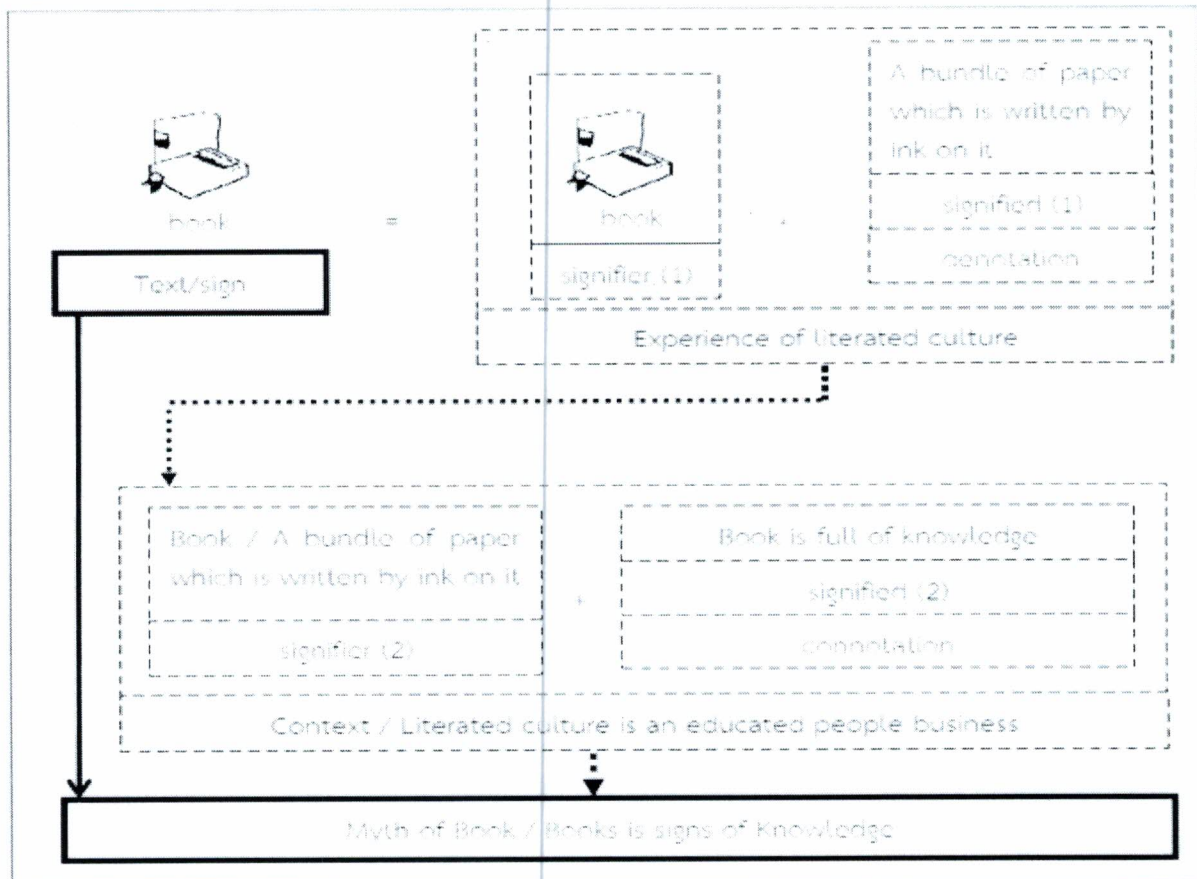
Semiology is the linguistic analysis which is one of the most influential methodologies in Structuralism. The most notable founder of this genre of linguistic analysis was Ferdinand de Saussure. In his 'Course in General Linguistics', de Saussure (1983) proposed a science that studies language as a system of signs that express ideas within any society. The sign has a double entity: a signifier, a pattern of sign, and a signified, a significant denotation meaning of sign. What attaches a signifier and signified together is an arbitrariness of the sign, a culture impelled by a shared psychological experience between human in each society. In short, the meanings of things are given by the practices/processes that create them. So, to simplify de Saussure's concept of the sign, this article presents the figure below:

Figure 1. Using de Saussure's System of Signs to clarify a sign of a book



Culture has impelled by a shared psychological experience between human in each society. In the other words, following Barthe's (1972) concept, culture is a socially constructed value and the goal of this construction is to make the shared concept of 'to do/to accept' and 'not to do / not to accept'. Culture double signs into a naturalised and unquestioned status. This implies that the signified may not only be a significant denotated meaning of a sign, but there is something also to be added in a second level in the system of signs and this has made signs to become a Myth. Barthe extended de Saussure's semiology to uncover cultural materials of bourgeois society whom crammed its values through signs. In his mythologies, Barthe (1972) paid attention to the signified. He found and segregated 'the second order of sign' from the system of signs. As Charoensin-o-larn (2002) commented, the second order of a sign is the psychological process of an adding, augmenting, distorting, naturalising, and depoliticising of cultural values into signs which elevates the sign to become myth. Moreover, Barthe also extended the signified into 2 levels: a denotation and a connotation. Denotation is a descriptive level of the signified while the connotation is at a constructive level. While denotation is understood objectively depending on general experience, connotation is interpreted subjectively depending on particular societal culture. In short, as ever there is a strong myth that is explicitly political, the weak myths are the myths which have already lost their political character. Let's conclude Bath's mythologies process by extending the recently discussed figure above:

Figure 2. A myth of books revealed using Barth's Mythology



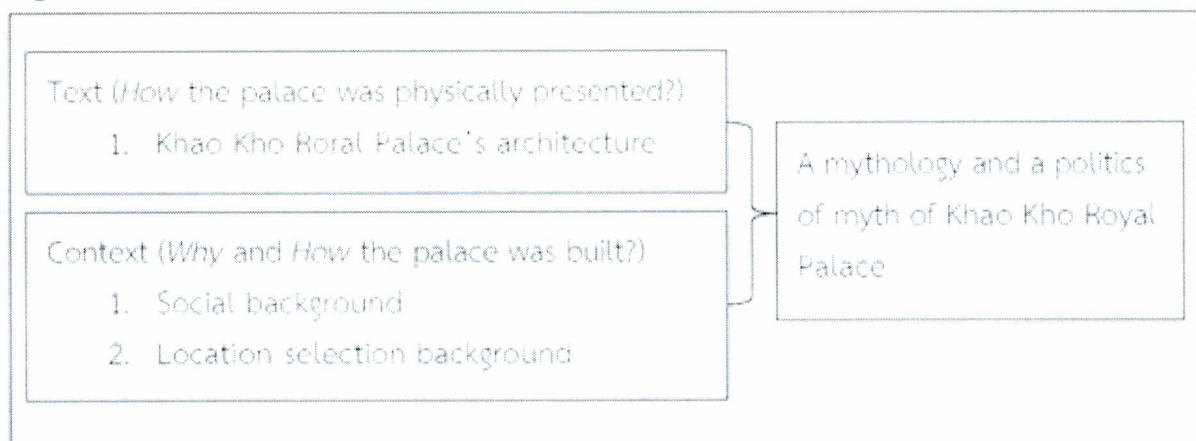
As in Figure 2, objectively, books are just a bundle of ink-written papers stapled together. But, when we look at someone reading or even holding book, we also suddenly assume that that one is educated because they have a sign of knowledge, a book. So, it is a myth of books. Moreover, books are objectively the product of the literate culture. To be a literate person, ones must be trained in the task of education. As for books they are an important instrument of education, what is written down in books should be 'well-selected' to satisfy established power in the society. The 'selection-to-write' is the controllable providence of the writers to transfer the 'to-be-known' and dismiss the 'not to-be-known' to the readers/receivers. Undoubtedly, in the general process of knowledge contribution in a literate culture, writers have a higher power status than readers because in the writing of books' writers legitimise knowable knowledge, while knowledge legitimised by writers' has a higher social status. In short, knowledge is politically selected while the myth of books is a sign of knowledge. So, the myth of a book is 'politically' in consequence (Jermisittiparsert, 2011; Jermisittiparsert & Wongsurawat, 2018a, 2018b).

The Mythology of Khao Kho Royal Palace

From the conclusion of the first section, this article presents the noteworthy connection between architecture and politics. Architectural design also relies on the ideological significance of each societal period, and all apolitical architecture is, in fact, political.

For the conclusion then, Khao Kho Royal Palace has become the sign of graceful relation between King Rama IX's legacy and Phetchabun people's loyalty in the subdued period of the CPT in the Cold War Period. The palace has not only portrayed a picture as an actually 'apolitical TRUTH', but also a myth. What is the 'politics of TRUTH' which is constructed behind the architectural design of Khao Kho Royal Palace? To answer this question, in Figure 3, a framework is designed using Barthe's methodological concept to analyse and reveal The Mythology of Khao Kho Royal Palace:

Figure 3. Framework



From the framework above, this article first examined Khao Kho Royal Palace's architecture as text to find its denotation. The research question is 'How the palace was physically presented?' From image 1 which was taken during fieldwork, Khao Kho Royal Palace is a white concrete no-rooftop-building with an orange roof. The main building is designed in a split-level style which makes it 'seems like' the building was divided into five buildings/parts. Even the main building has been designed with a bread-box form, but if we draw a line from the top of every part a gable is revealed. (See image 2)

Image 1. Khao Kho Royal Palace from the front view

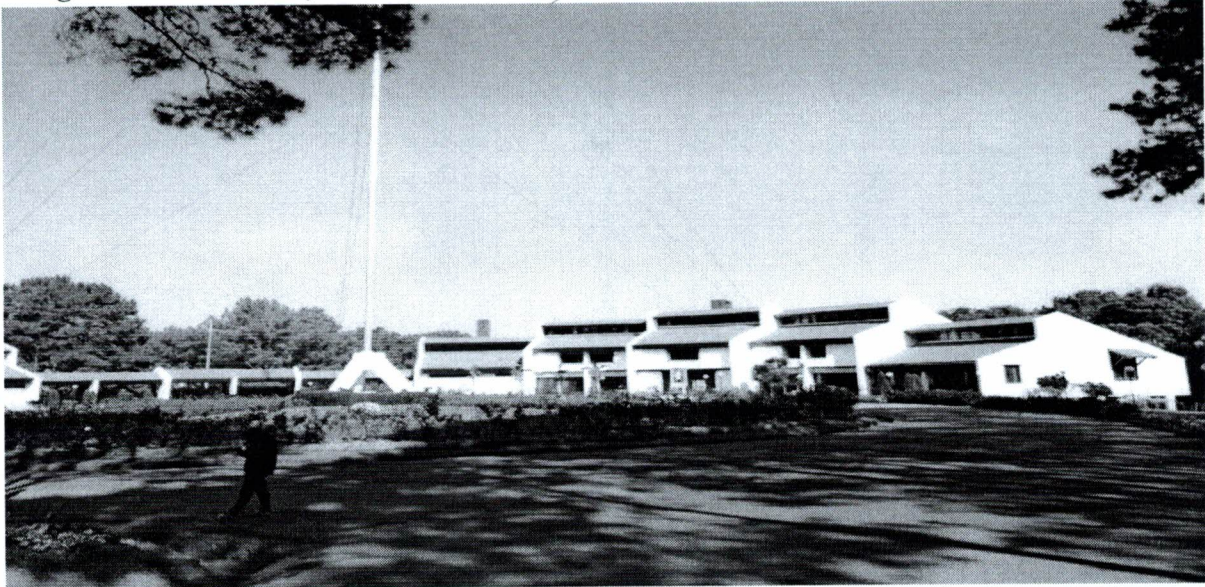


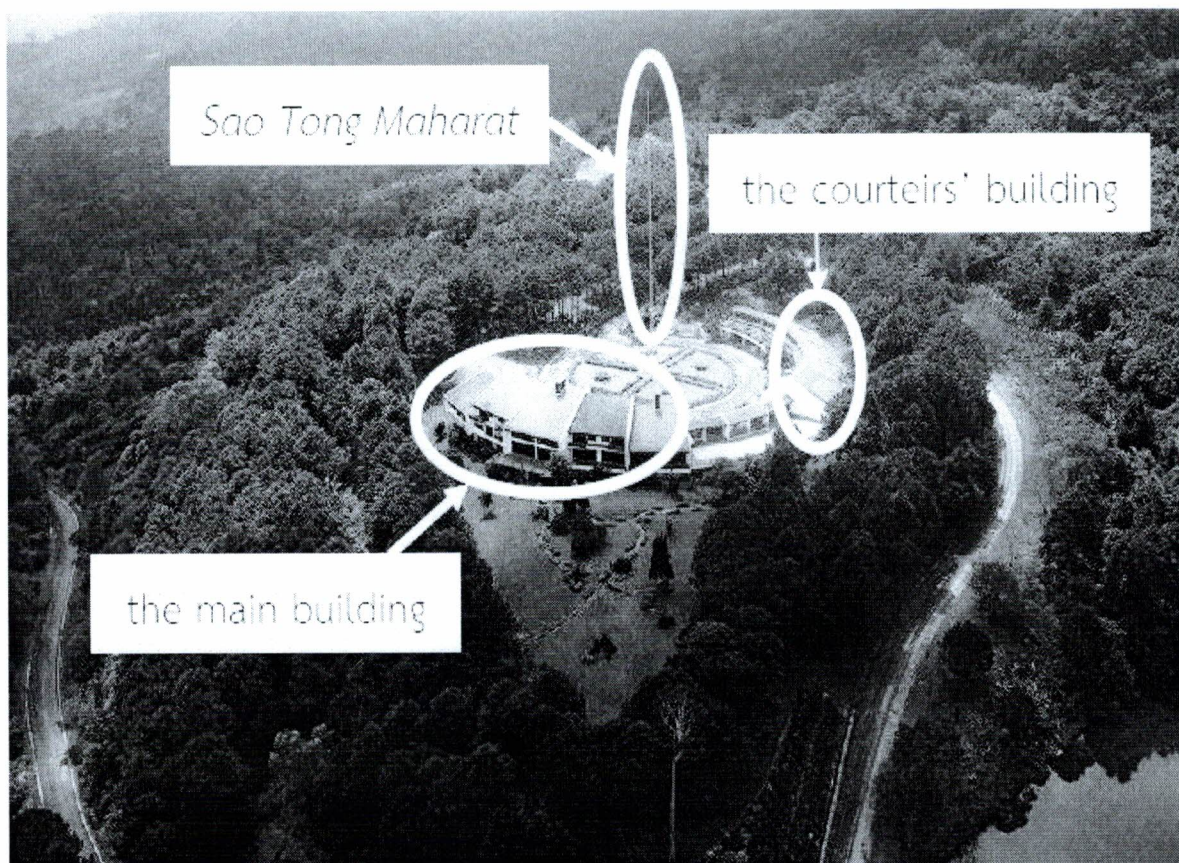
Image 2. A gable-form was hidden in the main building



Because this is the king's property, the research team cannot enter the inside of the palace, therefore the internet was used to obtain data. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) and The Thailand Tourism Website (<https://thailandtourismdirectory.go.th>) have described Kho Royal Palace as consisting of; linkage buildings in the circular/ring form; the courtiers' building is linked to the two stirred main building; The upper one has two large chambers, arranged to be King Rama IX and Queen Sirikit's bedrooms; the down stairs consists of the king's restaurant with a kitchen front, an audience chamber, a big chamber, the king's two

daughter's bedrooms. The front of the palace has a rounded flower garden; a 60ft tall pole, raised to celebrate King Rama IX's 60th birthday, called *Sao Tong Maharat* (a flag pole of the great king).

Image 3. Bird's eyes view of Khao Kho Royal Palace shows overall architecture in a rounded-form with *Sao Tong Maharat* in the center of the ring. The delusive main building is on the left while the courtiers' building is on the right. The second part is linked by an open corridor. **Source:** www.khaokho.com



Obviously, the palace architecture can be denoted, in Prakitnontakarn's concept, in a genre of *Khana Ratsadon's* architecture: The whole concrete less decoration bread box design with a flat roof building was portrayed in a geometrical appearance; a Thai-style architectural tradition, a gable, was hidden; The room format between king's royal family and the courtiers was not clearly separated. Based on de Saussure's system of signs, the uniqueness of Khao Kho Royal Palace is different from other palace's architecture especially a luxurious decoration and a gable as can be seen in the villa-form palaces in Image 4 – 7.

Image 4. Chitralada Royal Villa, Dusit, Bangkok. The palace decorated in Baroque and Rococo style. **Source:** GangBeauty Web Page Editor. (2010.).



Image 5. Klai Kangwon Palace, Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan. The palace decorated in a Spanish style. **Source:** GangBeauty Web Page Editor. (2010.).



Image 6. Vimanmek Mansion, Dusit, Bangkok. The palace decorated in Euro-Thai Fusion style. **Source:** GangBeauty Web Page Editor. (2010.).

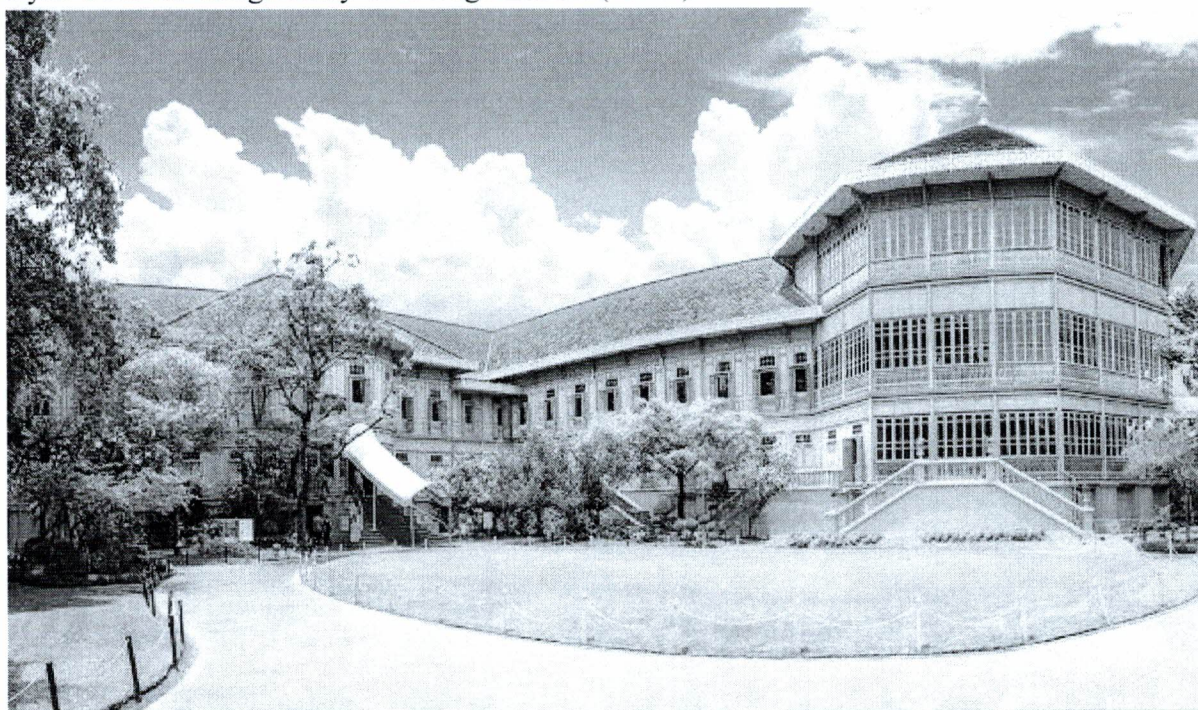


Image 7. Phaya Thai Palace, Ratchathewi, Bangkok. The palace decorated in Romanesque and Gothic style. **Source:** GangBeauty Web Page Editor. (2010.).



The second step of this examination was to connote a context of the palace. (*Why* and *how* the palace was built?). This article divided the examination into two aspects: a social background and a location selection background.

A Social Background

Image 8. A carved granite sign with a briefly historical background of Khao Kho Royal Palace



Besides the recorded archive in the official documents and websites which have been mentioned above, in image 10 taken during fieldwork, a briefly historical background of Khao Kho Royal Palace was carved. This place is formerly a CPT terrorism operation territory that caused the Thai state to advance troops to vanquish them out. The result of the battle brought the loss of many 'civilian(s), police(s), and soldier(s)' lives. Then the 3rd

Army Area and the Internal Security Operations Command Region 3 took the royal idea in solving the conflict and launched the Royal Project on the Khhek river basin. For the remembrance of His Majesty's generous legacy, Khao Kho Royal Palace was constructed by the donated budget from the Phetchabun people in return for His Majesty's benevolence. The palace was also to be His Majesty's project office and His Majesty's recreation resort. The source of the budget not only reflects the idea of loyalty, but also reconstructs/constructs the idea of a reciprocal relationship between the king and the people.

To clarify the concept of the Thai king which has been derived from 2 sources: the Vedic-Hindu's *Kshatriya* or a warrior-ruler and the Theravada Buddhist's *Dhammaraja* or Dharma-king which were later inherited into the concept of *Pho Khun* (Father-lord). However, these concepts got along well with the Absolute Monarchy culture where the role of the king is to work at the centre of the kingdom where he can look out to all the subjects via his nobles. The leaving out of the central city may cause an insurgence, so the king should leave as fast as possible (Prince Dhani Nivat, 1947). Moreover, in the general perception about King Rama IX, Thais were systematically acknowledged regarding His Majesty's excellences in various development legacies for the betterment of the Thai people. King Rama IX not only was an 'untouchable god-like celestial figure' but also the 'idol of goodness' whom bestows the tangible philosophy of life upon Thais. Hence, Thais' living frameworks were shaped by the dictum 'following the King's footsteps'. (Thanapornsanguth and Holbert, 2019). Thus, The Royal Projects have adjusted the role of the king, not only the role of fieldwork of the king but also made the king 'tangible' via the king's knowledge and the Royal Project's products (Chitbundid, 2007; Kongsawat, 2016)

Returning to the palace's architecture, officially, the palace was design by Mom Luang Tridhosyuth Devakula who is one of the royal descendants. The architecture is surprisingly designed in the modern genre, more specifically, following Prakitnonthakan's definition, *Khana Ratsadon's* Architecture. At the first glance, Khao Kho Royal Palace is designed under the conceptualisation of *Khana Ratsadon's* idea of equality: bread box design, no decoration, minimised Thai traditional style into a simple parametrical geometric architecture, flat roof, and no clear cut partition between the king's building and courtiers' building. In case of unequal hierarchical status the crucial notion of the CPT was to assault the Monarchy in the suppression and exploitation of the class conflict process. Hence, in the ideological strike back, the palace reflects the intention of the architect's idea of a horizontal 'no-class-conflict' relationship between the king and 'His' people. Comprehensively, the overall palace's architecture was laid in a rounded form as seen in image 3. The research team didn't find any official documents which recorded the actual concept/connotation behind Mom Luang Tridhosyuth's design. However, if Helfand (2006) is correct a circle-shape denotes unity, eternity, totality, infinity, a cycle of the physical nature and even ideological nature of unsurpassable perfection. Thus, the meaning behind the palace's overall form is the palace is a sign of unity between the king, his



army, and his subjects in the fighting with the CPT. As *Sao Tong Maharat* was 'put-in-trust' at the centre of the circle, this may stand for the idea that the king is the centrepiece of this unity. In addition, *Khana Ratsadon*'s architecture has no gable and Khao Kho Royal Palace has also a 'no-clear-appearance' gable as already mentioned in Images 2 above. The palace's gable has a hidden gable. For that reason the gable is a powerful form in reflecting Thai-ness in architecture. This means even the palace was designed with a modern concept, but there is some 'hidden-traditional-tradition' to differentiate this palace from other commoner's typical villa/building.

Moreover, Chitbundid (2007) summarises her interest in the relationship between the Thai people's sentiment regarding the social and political role of King Rama IX and the organising of the Royal Project in the early 1960s under Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat's government. Furthermore Chaloeontiarana (1979) conceptualised the political relationship between Sarit and King Rama IX as 'The Politics of Despotic Paternalism'; first, King Rama IX and the monarchy legitimised not only Sarit's regime, but Sarit's government policies; second, King Rama IX ordered many charities to collect donations. Chitbundid (2007) clarified the new role of the king as a pilgrim, whose journey was to show clemency to the 'distant-poor-people', was used as an apparatus to legitimise Sarit's despotism. Yet, after the fall of the CPT, the Thai army's role was adjusted from combatant to developers via His Majesty Royal Project and *Yutta Pattana* (warfare of development strategies). Since the king journeyed to distant provinces to launch many Royal Projects for 7-8 months a year, the resort palaces were constructed adjacently or nearby the place where the Royal Projects were lunch. For Khao Kho, the Royal Project on Khek river basin development, which is located about 12 km on the North of the palace, was launch by for reason that "...to enhance people's academic condition by lifting up job competency especially in agriculture to meet the satisfaction of subsistence. Infrastructures such as water supply, public school, electricity, health station, the market place, temples, etc. should be provided as groundwork for a permanent settlement. The appropriate development engages the community's support in the CPT's propaganda fight back. In order to fulfil this goal, King Rama IX gave royal funds to construct the Agricultural Product Processing Factory under King Patronage, which later became the Royal Project Agricultural Industrial Development at Khao Kho, Khao Ya village. (the Royal Project Agricultural Industrial Development at Khao Kho, 2010.)

Subsequently, Khao Kho Royal Palace nowadays has become one of the renowned tourist attractions for Thai people. This new role of the palace was set up in keeping with the tourism paradigm shift in circa 1950. In short, at that time, in Sarit's regime, tourism which was generally seen as recreation for elites and foreigners, has 'become-understood' as a profitable public industry which should be promoted to every Thai (Act of Tourism Support Organisation, 1960). Although, tourism policies are products of politics, it is hard to imagine how politics and tourism can be linked in the age of political conflict, the Cold

War. The Cold War ended up in 1992, and that linkage has still been uninterrupted. Eventually, a political social background of the palace was gradually hidden by Thai state's support tourism policies. In following Barthe's concept, in conclusion, political connotations were blurred and distorted under the Khao Kho Royal Palace mythology process.

Location Selection Background

Image 9. The location of Khao Kho Royal Palace on Khao Ya. **Source:** Google Earth.

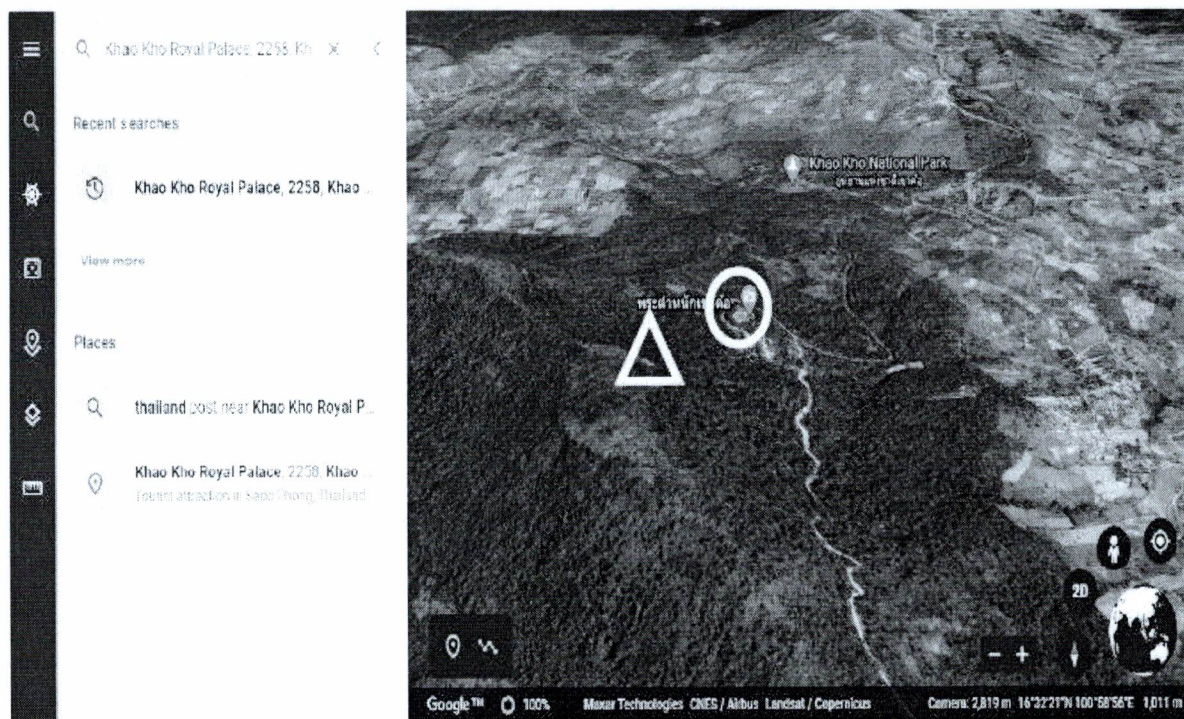


Image 9 shows the location of the palace (in the circle) on *Khao Ya* (*Ya* mountain) where the remains of the combat operation base camp (in the triangle) has since been located at 1,290 meters above the mean sea level. In excluding *Phu Tub Berk* (*Tub Berk* mountain), another one of Phetchabun's most famous tourist attractions, is at 1,786 meter above mean sea level. This means the top of *Khao Ya* is the highest point of the Khao Kho mountainous area. The palace is located at 1,011 meters above mean sea level of *Khao Ya*; which implies a sign of supreme loyalty of the Phetchabun people for the king.

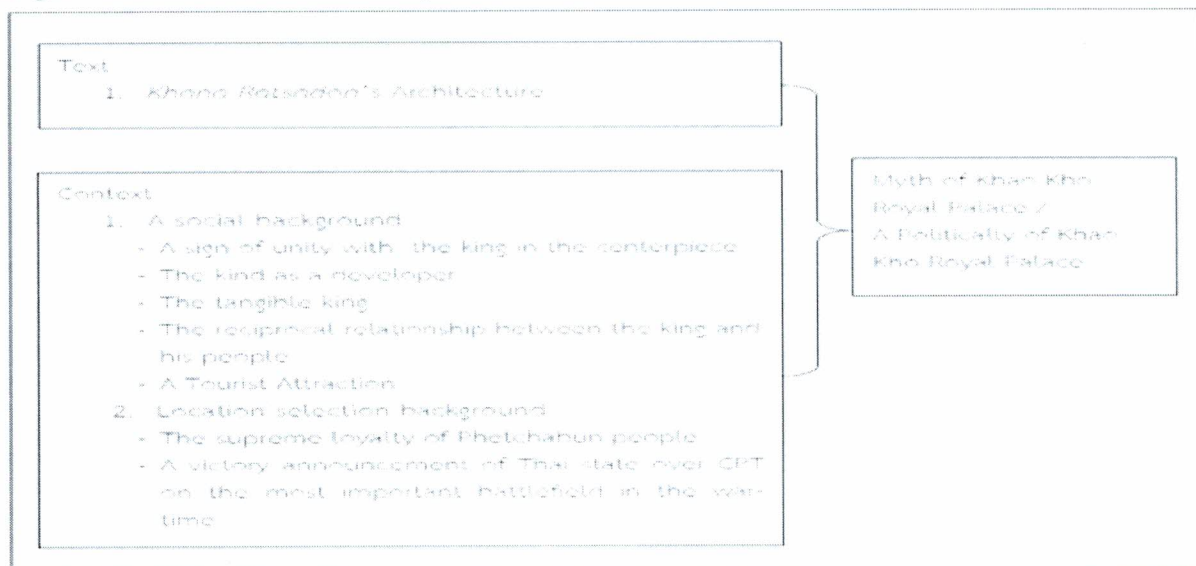
Furthermore, *Khao Ya* was an important strategic point in the battle with the CPT. As mentioned above; the other side of the palace is a monument of the victory over CPT. The location of the palace can also be implied as a victory announcement of the Thai state over the CPT on the most important battlefield in war-time. As Chitbundit (2007) comments, the

meaning of Khao Kho Royal Palace was changed from the mass seizing operation place in the period of the ideological war into the place of the development by the king's Royal Project

Conclusion: The Political Semiology of Khao Kho Royal Palace

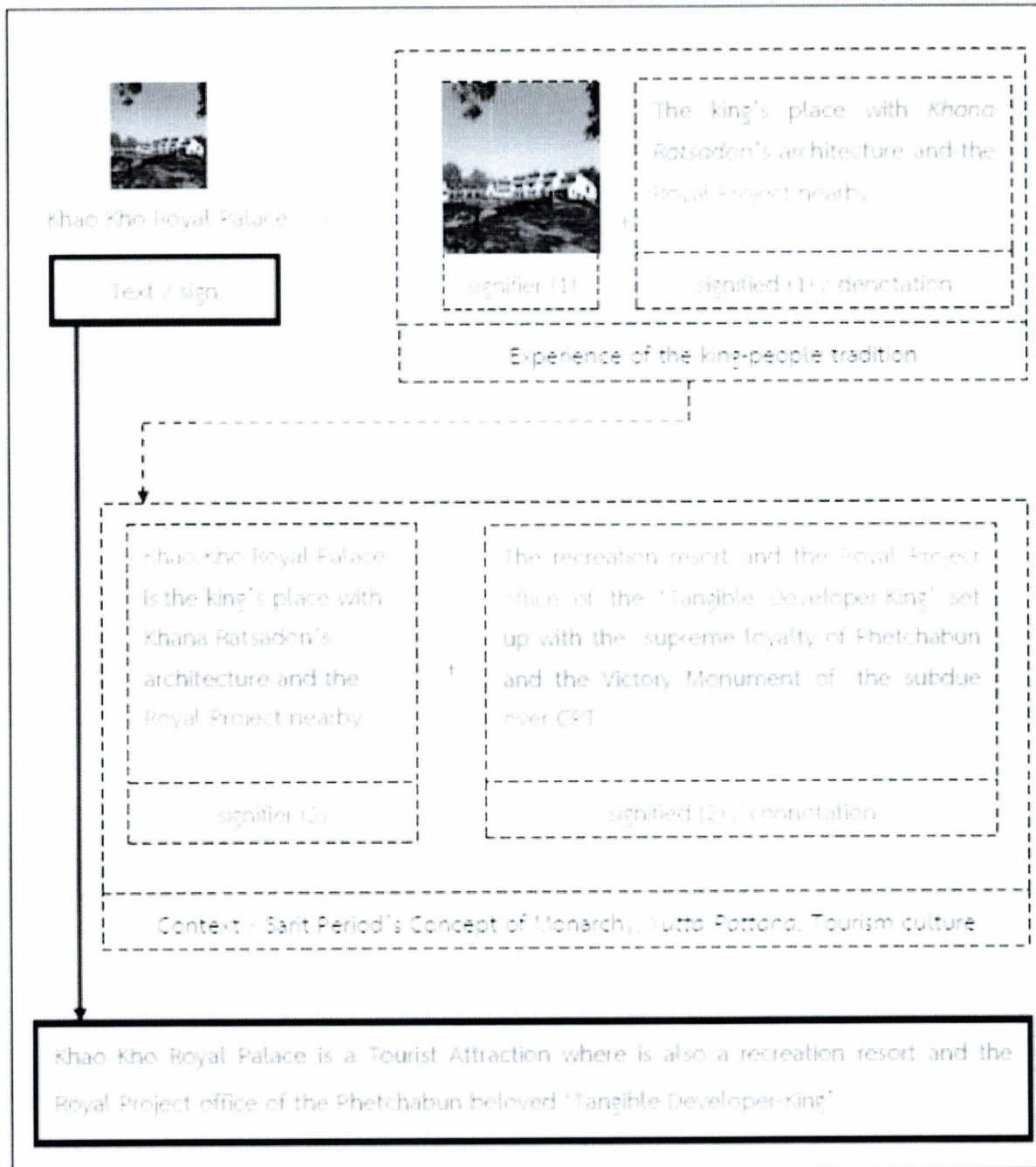
Figure 3 below presents the analysed data as follows;

Figure 3. Framework with analysed data



To complete the second final step of analysis, Data from Figure 3 should be synthesised in to the Mythology process as seen in Figure 4:

Figure 4. Mythology of Khao Kho Royal Palace



From figure 4 above, the mythology process constructs Kho Royal Palace's signified as a tourist's attraction and a monument of the Developer-King. In searching for the ideological-scape, the political connotation of Khao Kho Royal Palace was discovered. As a physical image, the palace is designed with *Khana Ratsadon's* Architecture which presents the overcoming of *Khana Ratsadon's* idea, the horizontal relationship between the king and his people, over the vertical relationship idea in the Absolute monarchy's notion.



With the examination of the background in 2 aspects, many political signifiers have been noticed; a monument of the subdue over CPT, Monarchy culture of Sarit's regime, the using of *Yutta Pattana* in place of militaries combat, the highest loyalty of the Phetchabun people to King Rama IX, and the neatly strike back of the Absolute monarchy idea of the vertical relationship between the king and his people to *Khana Ratsadon*'s architecture's idea. Most of all, with tourism culture after the Cold War, the signification of the political competition on the role and the relationship between the king and 'His' people was distorted. When the Myth was generated, politics in-between this relation is no more. The apolitical myth that Khao Kho Royal Palace is a tourist attraction and a recreation resort, and the Royal Project office of the Phetchabun beloved 'Tangible Developer-King' have, in fact, at the same time, politically blurred out other truths, and politically produce/reproduce the hierarchical reciprocal relationship of Thai monarchical ideologies between Thais' perception, the only one-left-TRUTH - 'In Remembrance of His Majesty The King'.



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